

**Gaming Club for impacting Lexical Range in English Learners**

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**Gaming Club for Promoting the English Lexical Range in L2 Students**

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### **Abstract**

This document describes our classroom Project whose objective was to test the efficacy of the strategy Digital Game Based Learning that uses video games and all their audio visual resources to generate more motivation in the participants and facilitates the process of learning new English words. In this sense, we implemented this project during 2 months and 10 sessions in a pandemic moment (Covid 2019) with 4 university students, whose English level was B1. This implementations consisted on exploring a video game and its multimedia resources with the objective of finding new and useful vocabulary to use in the following sessions. After this execution, we found that all the participants had a considerable improvement from the pre-test to the post-test with a special improve in their capacities to recognize the aural form of the new words.

### **Resumen**

Este documento describe nuestro proyecto de aula cuyo objetivo era probar la eficacia de la estrategia de aprendizaje denominada Digital Game-based learning la cual utiliza los video juegos y todos sus componentes audiovisuales para generar más motivación en cuanto al proceso de aprendizaje de nuevas palabras en inglés. En este sentido, nosotros lo implementamos este proyecto en tiempos de pandemia de Covid 2019 con 4 estudiantes universitarios, cuyo nivel de inglés era B1, en un trascurso de 2 meses y 10 sesiones. Las implementaciones consistían en explorar el vídeo juego y sus contenidos multimedia en aras de encontrar vocabulario nuevo y útil para sesiones subsecuentes. Después de dichas implementaciones, se encontró que todos los participantes mejoraron considerablemente desde el pre-test al post, teniendo una especial mejora en cuanto a sus capacidades de reconocer la forma auditiva de las palabras aprendidas.

### **Justification**

In a world in which English has become the international language for education, business and travelling, being able to communicate in this language is a crucial factor for the competitiveness of countries, but also for accessing working and academic opportunities.

Nishanthi (2018) lists more than 10 reasons why learning English is fundamental nowadays, among which we can mention: the position of this language as the international common tongue, since it is normally used for communication between people come from different countries; granting access to the most updated academic information, as most academic papers are written in this language; allowing access to the world of entertainment (series, movies, or documentaries). Additionally, some studies such as the one carried out by Bialystok & Barac (2012) reveal that learning a second language makes you smarter.

Being aware of this reality, different Colombian Governments have tried to increase the knowledge of English in the country by designing and implementing public policies through the Ministry of Education intended to raise the low levels of English in the population. However, only 5% of the Colombian students achieved the expected proficiency. According to Fiszbein and Cronquist (2017) in their article *El aprendizaje del Inglés en América Latina* there are two main reasons for the low level in the region. The first one is the lack of English teachers since according to this article Colombia lacks more than 3200 teachers for public institutions where there is not even one English teacher, so English is not taught. The second reason is the low proficiency of the actual English teacher since a diagnostic test was made to the 50% of 13.200 English teachers and only 43% of the test takers got more than B2+ level. One of the possible reasons for this, according to the article, is that although there are systems for ensuring the high quality certification of the English

teacher programs, there are still some non-certificated programs that continue to enroll new students and format more teachers.

Also, It must be acknowledged that it is not easy to learn a foreign language in monolingual contexts such as the colombian one, where exposure to the target language by means of interaction with native speakers is not frequent, However, nowadays ICT allow opportunities for accessing contents being exposed to the reality of the language finding a poor communities for interacting with other speakers of the language exploring different kinds of texts and websites for improving language competencies. Also, ICT allows the use of interesting tools such as gamification, virtual reality, and videogames. In this sense, studies such as the one conducted by Galvis (2011) and the one conducted by Karsenti, Bugmann, and Parent (2019) have revealed the positive impact of strategies based on the use of video games for the development of language knowledge and language skills, particularly with young adults. In this order of ideas, we propose to link two of our passions, video games and language teaching in order to foster vocabulary acquisition and use among some young English learners by the employment of video games as the main pedagogical tool.

## **Objectives**

### **Learning Objectives**

- For students to acquire new vocabulary by means of exposure to free video gaming sessions

### **Teaching objectives:**

- To plan, develop and implement pedagogical activities that integrate video games in language learning.
- To identify students' responses towards video games.
- To test an innovative strategy based on DGBL in the language learning context.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Literature Review**

During the last decades, many studies have been done in order to demonstrate that video games can help to develop certain skills and can be used as a mean to acquire new knowledge . For example, Galvis (2011) in a research conducted in Colombia, and Karsenti, Bugmann, and Parent (2019) in Canada, reported that the implementation of video games in classes helped young learners to improve their knowledge related to art, history, and English vocabulary.

*Using Video Game-Based Instruction in an EFL Program: Understanding the Power of Video Games in Education*



In 2011, Galvis carried out a research study with 4 young men in a military academy in Colombia in order to examine how the use of video games could influence and facilitate the acquisition of a new language, in this case, English. The researcher proposed the use of the video game Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas to be used during the English class to replace the textbook suggested in the curriculum. To implement the game the researcher designed three language exploratory activities to be used while playing; the first one implied students to explore the different places found in the game and the professions they could see in Los Santos. In the second activity, students had to explore the different music available in the radio game stations and choose their favorite ones, and finally, the third one encourages students to look over the different locations that the game has such as downtown hospital, police station, a jail etc.

For data collection, the research used field notes, a survey asking the students perception about the use of the game in the classroom, and a semi-structured recorded interview.

The results showed that the video game GTA San Andreas can be adapted to teach a language by designing language exploratory activities that allow students to interact with the context, and that it can help to keep the students' attention and engage them during the different classes.

### ***Can Students Learn History by Playing Assassin's Creed?***

A second study exploring the usefulness of video games for learning was the one conducted by Karsenti, Bugmann, and Parent in 2019 in Montreal (Canada). The researchers' purpose was to assess if it was possible for 329 students to learn history throughout the use of Assassin's Creed, a game that took gamers through different historical settings.

The methodology used was to measure the teachers' uses of the video game for learning and teaching; particularly, the use of images, film clips, gameplay sequences, and any other scenarios extracted from the game.

For the data collection they used 1) questionnaires, 2) individual interviews, 3) group interviews and 4) videotaped classroom observation.

The results of this research were given in two different perspectives: students' responses to gaming in the classroom and the effectiveness of gaming for learning history. In this sense, the results showed that only 9.13% of the students did not like to use the game in class, whereas 58.73% thought it was very interesting or fun. On the other hand, in terms of learning history, results showed that 58% of students learn events, 18% learn characters, 12% places, 9% monuments, 4% culture.

### ***Sustaining Vocabulary Acquisition through Computer Game: A Case Study***

The objective of the study conducted by Nadzrah Abu Bakar & Elaheh Nosratirad was to explore and understand how a computer game can be used as a learning tool and how the motivation to learn can be impacted by using them. The participants were 3 adults ESL learners that were between 22 and 30 years old and that had a low English proficiency.

The computer videogame selected for the study was SIM 3, since it provided the language input necessary and also the game was free online. In the game participants were able to find different types of vocabulary as levels progressed and new tasks (objectives) were unlocked. Participants played the game for two months, they were free to play whenever they wanted it and there were no limitations about time, they were able to set their own goals.

The instruments used for data collection were interviews, observations, self-checklist, pre and posttest and vocabulary list. The objective of the interview was to know their learning

strategies and their perspective of learning vocabulary through video games. The pre-test was given in order to test the participants' vocabulary levels and the post-test was made in order to review their progress.

The results, divided into 2 categories: Learners' attitudes and vocabulary learning, showed that the participants had positive attitudes towards learning English using computer games as they learned approximately 116.66 words by the end of the study. The participants also learned English vocabulary in a meaningful context as the environment allowed them to use the same vocabulary in different situations. As a result, this repetition facilitated the internalization of the words.

Another important factor that allowed the expansion of their lexical range was the motivation that students feel by playing. On the one hand, the freedom that students feel by playing and learning without a teacher or a schedule. On other hand, the opportunity to use the vocabulary learned in their real life, especially in their jobs.

### **Conceptual framework**

The purpose of this chapter is to present the main concepts used in this work: vocabulary, which refers to the set of words that people use in order to communicate in a language, the different types of vocabulary that are divided according to its use: receptive and productive, the acquisition of vocabulary that can be implicit or explicit and how the vocabulary can be taught using different strategies. These concepts will be explored through Hatch and Brown (1995), Montgomery (2007) Alqahtani (2015), and Susanto (2017). Additionally, the use of the video games for learning processes and its impact in society will be explored through authors such as Willis, Hovey, and Hovey (1987), Tanis and Janiz (2007) and Prensky (2001).

## **Definition of Vocabulary**

The term vocabulary has been explored by many researchers due to the fact that it plays a crucial role in the acquisition or learning of a new language. Hatch and Brown (1995) stated that vocabulary is the set of all the words that an individual uses to communicate effectively. Considering these authors' perspective, it would be impossible to imagine communication without using words. This term was expanded some years later by Neuman and Dwyer (2009) who express that also there should be two categories to define the vocabulary: expressive vocabulary (speaking and writing) and receptive vocabulary (listening and reading). This is because there are two different mental processes while listening or speaking since the first is a productive process and the second is a receptive one.

In more recent years, Susanto (2017) mentioned, as previous authors stated before, that it is extremely necessary to learn new words as they are the basic unit of any language and play a crucial role in the success of acquiring or learning a new language, but also, he explained that it is important to draw attention to vocabulary since it allows the formation of complete spoken and written texts.

All these authors have brought out the importance of knowing vocabulary as it is the fundamental pillar for the acquisition or learning of a new language since we know that we are learning a language when we can identify the meaning of its words and we can use them in order to create meaningful sentences.

## **Types of Vocabulary**

In any process of learning or acquiring a language, it is crucial to point out which are the types of vocabulary that needs to be learned or acquired. In this regard, Hatch and Brown (1995) pointed out that there are two types of vocabulary: receptive and productive. The first one refers to all the words that we can recognize and understand when they are used in a

specific context. On the other hand, productive vocabulary is the set of words that we cannot only understand, but also use to produce an oral or written speech. Hamzehlou, Moghadam, Zainal, and Ghaderpour, (2012) added that it is possible that productive vocabulary to be larger than the receptive one since, for example, a second language learner who has learned words through study rather than exposure can produce them, but struggle in recognizing them in conversation

Additionally, in more recent years, in the book *The Bridge of Vocabulary* (2007), Montgomery explained that the vocabulary can be also divided into four types and into two subcategories depending on the purpose for which it will be used; Spoken vocabulary (Speaking and listening) and written vocabulary (Reading and writing). Listening vocabulary refers to the set of words that we listen to and can understand. By the time that a person reaches adulthood, he/she can recognize and understand approximately 50.000 words. Reading vocabulary refers to the words that we know while we are reading, we can understand more words than the ones that we use in our speaking. Speaking vocabulary refers to all the words that we use when we talk, approximately 5000 to 10000 in adulthood. Finally, writing vocabulary makes an emphasis on the words that a person can retrieve when they need to express themselves through written speech.

### **Vocabulary acquisition**

The notion of vocabulary acquisition has been discussed by many authors since it represents a crucial factor in the development of the human being and how he interacts with the world surrounding him. One of the first researchers who explored it was Reber (1967) who pointed out that the vocabulary can be learned explicitly by abstracting out information from the environment without using a specific strategy. This means that the person who is acquiring the language takes all the linguistic elements (vocabulary) that he/she needs for communicating

in it. For example, children do not express their desire for learning a word, they simply learn it. Ellis (2008) as Reber argued that implicit knowledge is intuitive, procedural, systematically variable, automatic, and that learners are not aware of what they learned. Also, she added the idea that those words are available for use in fluent unplanned language (daily spoken speech). On the contrary, she expressed that explicit learning requires the memorization of the words and their meanings. In this sense, the learners are conscious about what they learned and are able to express it verbally.

On the other hand, studies said that in the process of acquiring vocabulary a person learns the meaning of the word itself. Aitchison (1987) indicated that there are some steps that a child follows in order to acquire the meaning of a word: (1) attaching a label to a concept. (2) The categorization of a specific word into a large group of similar words. (3) Building connections between related words)

### **Teaching vocabulary**

It is important that we can evidence the progress of the theory of teaching vocabulary. In this regard, we are going to take a grammar translation perspective established by Thornbury (2002) who tried to provide the basis that involves this procedure. First, he pointed out the importance of using short text and a dictionary as the input for what is learned. Second, he proposed that one way to teach is by using translation that he defined as the direct method. For example, to tell students that car is “carro”, dog is “perro”, etc.

Later, it is crucial to present some strategies proposed by Alqahtani (2015) that can help teachers in presenting new words. One of these is the use of mimes, expressions, and gestures. For instance, many verbs like run, eat, or jump can be introduced using them. Additionally, he pointed out that the strategies of guessing from context is very helpful, but he

mentioned that it is important to highlight the difference between context within the text and the general context. The first refers to the one that includes morphological, semantic, and syntactic aspects in a specific context, while the second refers to the background knowledge that people have and help them to make inferences. For example, when a person is asked to read a document, they have a piece of general knowledge and vocabulary that depends on his background and experiences. However, he can find, while reading, an unknown word and can make an inference about the meaning based on the context that the text provides, this is known as context within the text.

In more recent years, Susanto (2017) added a new strategy by suggesting that the use of drawing and pictures can help the students to connect the new words with their prior knowledge. For example, the use of pictures, while we are presenting a short story, can help students to understand it as well as acquiring new vocabulary.

The different taxonomy of vocabulary that has been exposed above makes us aware that when we refer to vocabulary it is not merely words, but also, it includes certain factors that must be taken into consideration when we want to conduct any study related to vocabulary. In this sense, this paper will be based on different concepts like: implicit acquisition of vocabulary stated by Reben (1965). Receptive vocabulary by Hatch and Brown (1995). Guessing from context by Alqahtani (2015) and the process of acquiring new vocabulary by Aitchison (1987). All those factors play a crucial role in this paper since they are necessary for recognizing all the possible results that we will obtain when we carry out this project with the established population.

## **Video Games**

Now that we reviewed the concepts about vocabulary that will play a crucial role in the paper, it is necessary to explore some terminology related to the area of video games. In this regard, first, it will explain the impact that video games have had in society. In order to achieve this, its impact will be explained throughout two different concepts such as its popularity, where it will be found authors such as Funk (1993) and the statistic from ESA and ESAC, and interpersonal relationship, where it will be found a contrast of ideas from Santiago, Bontia and Reyes (2014) with the ideas from Tanis and Janiz (2007). Additionally, it will be presented some uses that have been given to video games in the educational field by developers such as Willis, Hovey, and Hovey (1987) that expressed how videogames are a potential tool for teaching.

### **Popularity of video games in society**

It is impossible to refer to video games without mentioning the popularity that it has nowadays. First, it is crucial to highlight that it started to be popular in 1970 when the first video games were developed by Nintendo. Later, from the 90's it started to become more popular as it was stated by Funk (1993) "video games started to replace television as the main center of entertainment". In addition, it is important to mention the popularity of video games in a female population since it has been thought that they are not active users as was expressed by Ivory (2009) "Despite the rising popularity of video games, the majority of the medium's audience continues to be male. One reason may be that character representations in video games are geared toward male players." However, in more recent statistics provided by ESA (Entertainment Software Association) from USA and ESAC (Entertainment Software Association of Canada) the popularity of video games in women has been continuously growing from 39 % in 2008 to 46% in 2019 (USA) and from 39 % in 2008 to 50% in 2018 (Canada)



## **Impact of videogames in interpersonal relationships**

It is unimaginable to deny the popularity of video games in modern times and how they, with the use of other technologies like the internet and computer, have redefined social relationships. Santiago, Bontia and Reyes (2014) expressed that video games can cause isolation and decrease relationship engagement among players. However, different studies have shown another perspective on the impact of video games on social relationships. As an example, the research conducted by Tanis and Janiz (2007) pointed out that in shooter games available to play online more than 80% of individuals are part of teams/clans that allow them to interact with the other members through audio conversations or texts . For example, games such as Fortnite, Free Fire, Player Unknown battleground and Call of duty include a system voice and written chat that allows direct communication among players in order to enhance cooperation since there is always the necessity to achieve certain goals as a group.

Steinkuehler and Williams (2006) stated that video games adapt not only as tools that allow direct connections among players, but also, this kind of platform works as an alternative reality that empowers the social interaction by creating places in the virtual worlds similar to the ones that can be seen in the reality. For instance, games such as World of Warcraft, IMVU, and Second life introduce places like shopping malls, restaurants, and pubs where people can meet and share their experiences and thoughts. Additionally, McMillan and Morrison (2008) pointed out that video games, through their different mechanisms that allow the communication, have granted the relationship building and created bonds between people who feel more comfortable to talk about their daily lives, problems and ideas with their online friends than their real ones.

## **Use of video games in learning**

Due to the popularity that it has in the society and immediate feedback it gives, many developers like Willis, Hovey, and Hovey (1987) started to investigate the field of education in video games. Their intention was to create video games that allow the teaching of content in different subjects such as science, social science, and ethics, among others. Later, more than identifying video games as a potential tool to teach content, Kirriemuir and McFarlane (2003) added two more potential uses of the video games: the development of skills and abilities and a stimulus for learning. The first establishes that video games enhance skills such as deduction, memorization, reasoning, and communication. The second means that video games influence affection and motivation. For instance, when a game is sufficiently challenging and entertaining for the gamer, he obtains an intrinsic desire to continue playing. More recently, Barr (2017) acknowledged the benefits already mentioned, but he added more such as improvement of motor, decision making, adaptability and problem solving skills. As an example of improvement of motor skills, there are some video games like Guitar Hero or Super Star that simulate playing music. Its objective is to press bottoms in the exact time that notes are scrolling on the game screen. In the beginning you can start with easy and slow levels, but after some weeks of playing you can see that you are faster than before, so you can attempt harder and faster ones.

## **Digital Game Based Learning**

Prensky (2001) suggested the integration of video games in a classroom environment for learning a language by taking into consideration some video games characteristics such us:

- **Engagement:** For learning any language, it is important to repeat and practice. In this sense, since video games are extremely engaging, this will allow people to spend

hours playing while they enjoy, so if video games have something to teach, this will become a tremendous learning opportunity.

- **Interactivity:** This means that in video games, the players are not passive users, they are always making something to achieve the goals of the game.
- **Feedback:** in games are instant and memorable, and it can be given visually and audibly. This means that even if the player dies in the game, this would be a signal for the user that he is doing something wrong and must change his strategy to achieve the goal. As a result, it can enhance problem solving skills and creativity.

Furthermore, this approach suggests not only to dive into the mechanism of the video games, but also in the different aspects that the game has such as the characters, the places, and its story. For example, if a videogames has many characters, they can be explored and students can be asked to make a short oral or written presentation about them in order to apply what was learnt in other context different to the video game itself

Video games as the second main factor of this paper also require a rigorous study of its division regarding the impact in society and in education. Additionally, it is important to mention that this study will be conducted due to all the potential benefits explained by authors such as McFarlane (2002) and Barr (2017) among others who consider that video games should be implemented into the curriculum in order to obtain all the benefits that have been explained.

## **Methodology**

The purpose of this chapter is to explain detailly how this classroom project was conducted in terms of context and setting, participants, instructional design, implementation, and instruments of data collection

## **Context and Setting**

This classroom project was initially planned for being implemented in a public institution in Pereira. Nevertheless, due to the pandemic situation of the COVID-19 and the impossibility to have a physical classroom to work with high school students, we made the decision of reducing the number of participant to only four university students since although this is a project where we can make use of the technology, it was not easy to find students with all the technological devices required to complete successfully this project.

In order to remplace the physical classroom we used different tools that allow us to keep contact with students and have an academic environment. First, we used Whatsapp as this app allowed us to send messages immediately, so we use it for sharing information, links and schedules. Second, we used Google Meets as the main tool for connecting to the sessions and sharing all the explanations, thoughts, and pieces of information regarding the video game. Third, we used Google Forms where after all the sessions students shared their thoughts about the use of video games for learning new words and commentaries about their motivation with the activities Finally, as an excellent and natural way to connect with students, we use the video game itself where we developed most of the activities for having contact with new words.

## **Participants**

As explained in the previous section, the impossibility of implementing our project with the students initially selected due to the pandemic, led us to consider which other English language learners could be benefited by participating in such a learning experience.

After exploring their interest and needs in relation to English language learning, we selected four students from a Colombian public university, two men and two women with ages between 22 and 29 who are currently not exposed to English since they are not taking any

course or have a direct input. Also, it was important to consider that the game requires certain capacities like problem solving, motor skills, and communicative competences that are related to what was stated by Piaget (1936) in his theory about cognitive development that explains that learners from more than 18 years are in the formal operational stage whose major characteristic are 1) Abstract logic and reasoning. 2) The concepts learned in one context can be applied to others.

After confirming that the participants had the requirements, we solicited them to complete a vocabulary test provided by Oxford in which they obtained B1- English level and as it is stated by the common European Framework of Reference for Language they are able to

- Arrange a job interview and interview for a job in your area of expertise.
- Discuss your personal and professional hopes and dreams for the future
- Talk about your television viewing habits and favorite programs.
- Describe your education and your plans for future training.
- Talk about your favorite music and music trends and plan a night out to listen to live music.
- Talk about maintaining a healthy lifestyle and give and get advice about healthy habits.
- Talk about relationships and dating, including meeting people through social media.
- Go to a restaurant, order food, engage in polite dinner conversation and pay for your food.
- Participate in negotiations in your area of expertise, if you have help understanding some points.

- Discuss workplace safety issues, report an injury and explain rules and regulations.
- Discuss polite behavior and respond appropriately to impolite behavior.

**Practitioners:** This project was conducted by two pre-service teachers of tenth semester from the Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira who were between 23-24 years old. Both of them will be switching roles through the different lessons, being in this way planners, implementers and observers.

### **Instructional Design**

According to Friesen (1993) Instructional design can be defined as a system of logic order created to accomplish specific learning objectives. In this order of ideas, our instructional design considers the following aspects: diagnosis, design, implementation, assessment, instruments, and resources as they allow us to plan and select the most accurate tools for having a successful classroom project.

**Diagnosis:** Before the implementation, the pre-service teachers made some observations related with the technological resources that the participants had, their internet connection and the capacity of the computers to fulfill the requirements that League of Legends has. Additionally, participants told us that they did not play MOBA (multiplayer online battle arena) games, but that they were interested in testing the possibility of learning some vocabulary by playing. Finally, it is important to mention that as they had different responsibilities during the day, all the sessions were conducted at night between 8-10 PM.

**Design:** The main purpose of this project was to apply Digital Game Based Learning with four students from different Colombian public universities. As was stated by Prensky (2007) the integration of video games can help teachers to increase students' engagement and motivation since it provides a lot of opportunities like: a context to practice, immediate feedback, challenging tasks, and the possibility to interact with more people. In this order of ideas, the facilitators will use the PPP (Presentation, Practice, and Production) model for planning the lessons (see appendix 1 lesson plan example).

In the **Presentation** stage, the facilitators presented some vocabulary of the video game, some of its stories, and some songs in order to expose students to the new lexical items. In the **Practice** stage students completed gameplays activities where they could actually watch and use the vocabulary that had been presented. Finally, in the **Production** stage the students used the new language presented in order to complete worksheets or written or oral presentations.

### **Implementation:**

To start with, the practitioners developed two sessions (at the beginning and at the end of the project) in which a pre-test and a post-test were applied to the students in order to know whether or not their vocabulary had expanded as a result of the didactic strategy applied. Additionally, there were ten more sessions that were oriented to the gameplay with the purpose of engaging students and making them familiar with the controls and mechanisms of the game as well as the vocabulary presented on it. On the other hand, the practitioners made different activities related to the game audio-visual content. For example, the reading of short texts about different regions used in the video game such as Demacia and Noxus. This allowed students to find the vocabulary that they had learned before in other contexts and even add new vocabulary to their lexical range. In addition, in some lessons, students selected their favorite characters in order to describe them through short oral and written activities.

### ***Assessment:***

Different production activities were employed during the project to assess students' development: oral and written presentations were performed by the students with the purpose of assessing their correct use of the vocabulary presented in the video game and the classes. Other activities for assessment were worksheets with matching activities, game shows such as "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?" and Pacman. They were used to measure students' learning of English vocabulary.<sup>1</sup>

### **Instruments and reflection**

In order to collect data and outcomes from students, this study used different instruments such as observation, teacher journals, and some artifacts produced by students.

#### **Teacher journal**

This is a common and personal instrument used by teachers who want to keep a diary of the lessons in order to highlight the most important events that he/she experiences during the class. In this sense, Wiegerová (2013) listed some advantages that teachers can obtain by using a teacher journal. For example:

- Describe situations that are harder to remember.
- Allow me to reflect on my own work.
- Allow finding the information about the research's application easier.
- Learn from mistakes, in order to make changes
- Self-regulation and self-improvement strategy
- Develop several competences related to teaching

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- Can work as a therapeutic tool due to the fact it allows the materialization of feelings and opinions that are hard to be expressed.

To focus on the specific issues of interest for this project, a set of guiding questions for the observations was created before the observations began and they served as guidelines for reporting our observations and insights in the teacher's journal (see Appendix 2).

Subsequently, this instrument was employed at the end of each session in order to collect information related to students' linguistic development, motivation and interest.

### **Students' Artifacts**

As was explained by Jimenez (2015), students' artifacts consist of all the linguistic products that the students make along the implementation of a lesson or sequence of lessons, such as flashcards, quizzes, reflective papers, listening, writing, speaking, and reading activities. Based on the collection and critical analysis of those outcomes, the practitioners can assess the advantages or limitations of their implementation. In this case, this instrument allowed us to know the expansion of the students' English lexical range.

### ***Resources***

In order to apply this project, the implementers made use of the video game League of Legends (2009). It has 148 characters that are divided into thirteen different regions, each of them with their own history. In terms of playability, it is a multiplayer online battle arena (MOBA) in which 10 players, divided into two teams of 5, assume the role of one character with more than three abilities that with help them to destroy the enemies base and nexus (It is the core that gives energy to the characters). The game requires the use of technological devices such as computers. video beam, speakers and a stable Ethernet connection.

### **Ethical Considerations:**

Due to the fact that this is a social study, it is important to ensure the protection of human rights regarding the participants of this project. In this sense, it is crucial to make some ethical considerations like those expressed by Mackey, Gass and Ross-Feldman (2005). To carry out this procedure we gave to the students and teacher in charge a consent letter that they signed with some specifications like:

- Their participation in this project is voluntary and they can quit this project whenever they consider pertinent without any academic repercussion
- They received information about the purpose, procedures, and data collection instruments of this study in addition to the possible benefits of this project in their language learning process.
- The data collected in this study will be managed with total confidentiality and any name or personal information will be not published under any circumstance.

## **Results**

### **Professional Growth**

Through the implementation of this classroom project we found some challenges and opportunities to improve our own professional development. According to Diaz-Maggioli (2004) professional development can be defined as a continuous learning process where teachers try to internalize how to teach based on their students' needs. In this sense, some situations such as teaching to small groups, applying an alternative teaching methodology, and lesson planning using technology could contribute greatly to our professional development. In this order of ideas, the possibility of teaching to a reduced number of students was a new experience for us since due to the Colombian context of public education, it is difficult to find classroom groups of less than 35 students. Nevertheless, in our project we

worked with only four students, so we could explore activities such as deep discussion, more inclusive learning since we could have a better control of the doubts and progress of each of the students.

On the other hand, in this project, we applied the Digital Game Based Learning (Prensky, 2001) strategy and even when we had some challenges, which will be discussed at a later stage, we felt a high degree of motivation since we were working with one of our favorite hobbies. According to Deniz et al (2006), when teachers have a great level of motivation, they are able to communicate that motivation to their students. Additionally, it has been demonstrated by authors such as Pelletier, Séguin-Lévesque, & Legault (2002) Reeve, Bolt, & Cai (1999) that motivated teachers are more likely to promote students' autonomy to learn. Finally, more recent studies such as the one conducted by Hein et al. (2012) showed that motivated teachers are more likely to use student-centered teaching styles while non-motivated teachers prefer more teacher-centered styles.

On the other way, we were able to find some challenges related with the planning, the short amount of time that we had to implement it, and the difficulties to find a game that provided us the necessary elements to apply the Digital Game Based Learning strategy, According to Fink (2005) a lesson plan is the road map that indicates to the teacher what students need to learn and the most efficient way to do it. In this order of ideas, it is important to take into consideration different factors such as the planning of specific learning activities and the creation of a realistic timeline, and given the nature of our project and the video game itself, it was very difficult to design lesson plans that covered all the vocabulary that students would get in each session and the basic characteristics of the game such as different strategies for winning, the knowing of the abilities of each character, and important concepts (farming, kiting, roaming, pushing, and jungling) to improve the game play abilities of the players since it could take months or even years to internalize them. In addition, when

we had to plan, we should consider not only the aspects related with the “theoretical” part or the vocabulary instructions, but also the way in which students interact with the game and the time that they need to internalize concepts related with the gameplay and its respective mechanics.

In addition, the necessity of finding an appropriate video game that fulfills certain characteristics was presented from the beginning, so we needed to obtain a video game free to play, with many resources to explore vocabulary, and that did not need high technical requirements to be installed. Considering the mentioned factors, we found League of Legends and its respectively audiovisual universe that not only filled the previous requirements, but that also allowed us to use songs, short texts and comics to expand the vocabulary of the participants,

To conclude, with the implementation of this project we had some difficulties and opportunities that allowed us to improve and reflect upon some practical skills and theoretical knowledge for teaching English that we have acquired during all our academic process and could be evidenced in our future teaching experiences.

### **Students’ responses**

Before implementing this project we had a high degree of expectations since we were dealing with people who mostly used to play video games and in this project we pretended to use them for impacting their lexical range and their motivation for learning English.

In this order of ideas, we asked students to keep a journal and assess daily their reactions to the activities and materials employed as well as their motivation, by valuing between 0 and 10 the following questions:

1. How entertaining was the video game?
2. How attractive was the audiovisual material used in the session?

### 3. How motivated were you to make the activities proposed by the implementers?

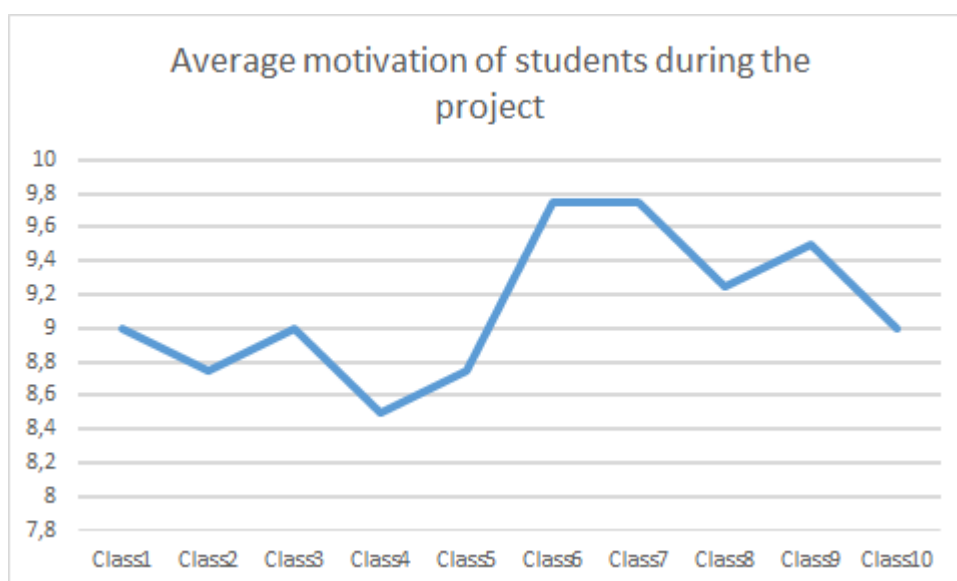
The following table reflects their answers and the average value obtained for each question.

Table 1. Average motivation of the students

	Class1	Class2	Class3	Class4	Class5	Class6	Class7	Class8	Class9	Class10	Average
Question1	8,5	8,25	8,5	8	8	9,75	9,75	8,5	9	9	8,73
Question2	9,5	8,75	8	7	8	10	10	0	9	0	8,78
Question3	9	8,75	9	8,5	8,75	9,75	9,75	9,25	9,5	9	9,13

In general terms, participants showed a positive attitude towards the integration of League of Legends into their learning process. As we can see in Table 1. From the answers of students about the 10 class sessions provided, motivation stayed stable throughout the process. That is even more evident when we create a graph (Graph 1.) With the data provided by the students, especially regarding the questions 3 “How motivated were you to make the activities proposed by the implementers?” And noticed that the degree of motivation oscillated from 8 and 10 during all the sessions.

Graph 1. Development of students' motivation



Additionally, the assessment of the audio-visual resources used in most of the sessions (excluding class 8 and 10 since audio visual content was not used) was also very positive, which should have encouraged them to continue playing the game and learning the vocabulary related to it. Our inference seems right when we consider that 3 out of the 4 participants manifested their desire to continue playing the game after finishing the project.

On the other hand, in order to know their final thoughts about the use of video games to learn vocabulary, we asked participants their perceptions about the integration of video games in the language learning processes. The general perspective was positive as can be seen from their answers. Next, we present next some interesting samples that give evidence of our interpretation:

Student A: *"En mi caso el juego y aprender vocabulario a través de él fue un reto para mí porque creo que tengo un pequeño problema con el inglés. pero me ayudó a tener más retención y me motivó a aprender más fácil las palabras. Digamos que ahora conozco muchas palabras y eso, para mí fue un reto y estoy muy satisfecha con los resultados."*

Student B: *"Me pareció muy interesante y novedoso, nunca había visto que alguien usara un videojuego para enseñar inglés. Generalmente hay métodos más tradicionales y sí, he aprendido harto, muchas palabras que no conocía y el juego tampoco lo conocía."*

Student C: *"Considero que el juego ayuda a facilitar el vocabulario en inglés tal como se evidencia en nuestro proceso. El juego lo desconocía, pero me llamó la atención esta didáctica de aplicar un juego como una herramienta para aprender vocabulario. Considero que se debe aplicar más seguido y que sirve para diferentes edades y esto es una prueba de ello, para mí fue muy fructífero."*

Student D: *“En mi caso me pareció una experiencia enriquecedora conocer más de este tipo de juego ya que yo no soy mucho de jugar juegos de guerra, entonces el vocabulario que uno aprende en relación de esta particularidad le permite a uno acercarse más y de pronto interesarse en jugar”*

As it can be seen from the adjectives used to describe their experience (satisfecho, interesante, novedoso, fructífero, enriquecedora), the participants had a very positive view of the strategy and of the game and materials employed. All of them considered that the strategy helped them to improve their vocabulary and appreciated the innovation that the use of this kind of tools for learning English involves.

To conclude, throughout the implementation of the project we were able to notice how the integration of video games can positively impact the desire of students to develop different learning activities beyond the limitations of a traditional classroom and how important is the adaptation of the teaching content to the particular characteristics of participants such as age, time availability, level of English and learning necessities.

### **Linguistic outcomes**

As it will be remembered, the learning objective proposed for this classroom project was “ For students to acquire new vocabulary by means of exposure to free video gaming sessions”.

To validate the achievement of this goal, the practitioners asked the participants to complete a diagnostic questionnaire before and after the implementation of the learning sessions. They were used as pre-test and post-test.

The same test was used in both occasions and was divided into 3 different sections, related to three different aspects of learning a word, which were:

1. Association of isolated words with images (Associate Written W-Im, 13 questions.)
2. Association of written words in specific contexts. (Written Words in context, 7 questions.)
3. Recognition of aural form of isolated words (20 questions)

There were a total of 40 questions, which gave the participants the option of getting a total of 40 points.

The participants' results in these 3 sections of the test, allowed us to understand their achievement of the proposed learning goal. Next, these results will be presented and discussed.

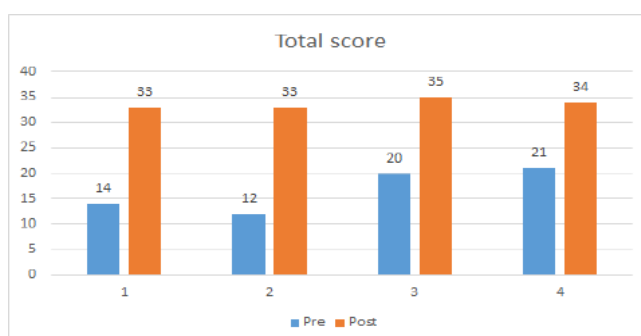
Table 2 shows the score obtained by the different participants in each of the sections as well as their general results for the pretest and the post test.

Table 2: Comparative Chart of Participants' results

Participants	Associate Written W- Imag		Complete with written words		Dictation		Total	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
1	5	13	4	7	5	13	14	33
2	6	13	4	7	2	13	12	33
3	10	13	6	7	4	15	20	35
4	10	13	6	6	5	15	21	34

### General results pre-test and post-test

Graph 2. Participants' General Results





Graph 2 presents the total score of the pre-test and the post-test. Considering these results, we could observe that all participants had a significant increase in their scores if we compare the initial results with the one obtained after the implementation. Specially, for participant 2 who showed the most important increment from 12 points in the beginning of the project to 33 out 40 at the end.

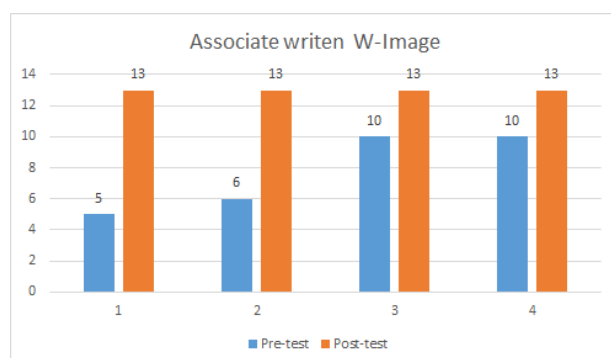
To facilitate the understanding of these results we will present each section individually. These results allowed us to appreciate individual achievements in each section as well as differences among the participants.

### **Association of written words with images**

The first step into learning vocabulary is recognizing the concept and being able to relate to the word. To value students' achievement in this field, seven questions in which students had to match words from the game with their corresponding images were included in the tests.

Next these results are presented.

Graph 3. Participants' results in Association of WW with Images



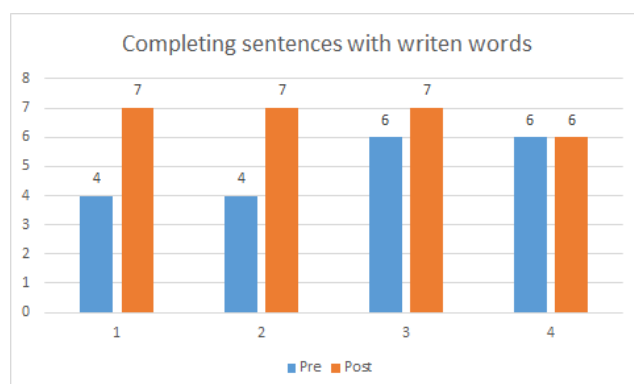
Graph 3 shows the results of the section related to the association of written words with images. In this graph we can observe an improvement in all the participants. This improvement is particularly evident in Participant 1 and 2, who with scores of 5 and 6 points respectively in the pre-test progressed to 13 points (the maximum possible score) in the post-test. Participants 3 and 4, who had obtained 10 points in the pre-test, were also able to achieve

the maximum possible score. It is thus clear that the strategy was significantly useful for the participants in terms of recognition of the new words implemented in the game.

### **Completing sentences with written words**

Apart from being able to associate words with their respective meanings, knowing vocabulary involves being able to produce that word (both in writing and orally) and know if the word fits in a particular linguistic context. This requires not only participants' understanding of the actual meaning of the word but also the knowledge of the spelling of said word. It is a higher level of knowledge since it requires students to produce the word, not only to recognize.

Graph 4. Participants result in completing sentences with written words.



Graph 4 shows the results obtained in the section of completing sentences with written words. In this order of ideas, we could observe a certain degree of improvement since all students, save for participant 4, had at least a minor increase of their score from the pre-test to the post-test.

In our point of view, we believe that there could be some reasons why this section of the test did not show a significant improvement in the score of participants. These reasons could be the following: this was the section of the test that had less questions, so it is difficult to appreciate a significant improvement with few items. Secondly, the initial results obtained in the pretest were 50% and 75%; as a result, the margin of improvement was the lowest of all the tests. . Finally, the capacity to know how to use a word in context, could be the most

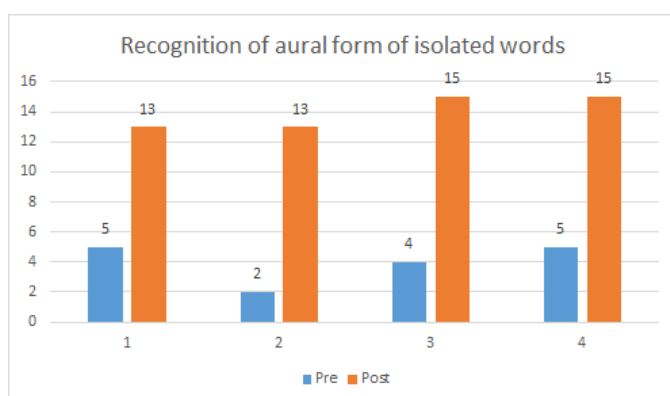
difficult task when we learn a new word; consequently, students could also struggle in completing this task.

### **Recognition of aural form of isolated words**

Vocabulary knowledge implies the ability to associate words with their aural form. Students are trained to recognize how a word sounds by modelling and their understanding is frequently tested through dictations.

To assess the participants' acquisition of the aural form of the new vocabulary presented through the game, the test included twenty questions in which participants had to write the words that they heard. Next, we will describe and comment on the participants' results in this section.

Graph 5. Participants results in recognition of aural form of isolated words.



Graph 5 illustrates participants' results on the dictation section, which was the part of the test where participants demonstrated the highest improvement. Initially, all participants obtained low scores. It can be observed that those who had better results achieved only 5 points from the 20 possible, which means 25% of correct answers in the pre-test. These poor results were not surprising since listening comprehension tends to be among the major difficulties of most English language learners.

However, after the implementation, all students experienced a considerable improvement in their abilities to recognize spoken words. This fact is particularly evident in

the case of participants 1 and 2, whose scores increased up to 13 points in the post-test, achieving a 65% of accuracy. In the same way, also participants 3 and 4 improved their initial results, obtaining 15 points out of the 20 possible (75% of correctness). As it can be seen in the graph, participant 2 seems to have been the one who obtained a greater improvement, showing that the strategy impacted very positively his ability to associate words with their pronunciation.

On the other hand, through the project, participants needed to fill a student's journal where they were asked to list the new words they had learnt during the session and the ones that they could recall from previous sessions. As a result, we could observe that most of the time, students wrote more than 5 new words per lesson and they were able to remember more than 10 from previous lessons. These words were found frequently in different moments and places, not only in the gameplay but also in all the activities related to the audiovisual content of League of Legends such as short stories, songs and comics.

Being involved in the design and development of this project helped us realize that repetition is a crucial process when we want to teach and learn new vocabulary. As stated by Nation (2008), the more frequently we repeat the words, the easier the recall of these words will be later on. Also, Webb (2007) stated that when students have more opportunities to reencounter the same words in different contexts, they can internalize them and increase their knowledge of those words. Furthermore, the results obtained in this classroom project were coherent with those of Nadzrah & Elaheh (2013), who in their research about the use of video games for vocabulary learning found that this type of strategy is particularly effective in the context of vocabulary acquisition.

## Conclusion

This project was an interesting experience in which we could test the validity of our ideas and hypothesis about the usefulness of video games for language acquisition.

Some positive aspects of the project that can be mentioned are the opportunity it provided for us as, pre-service teachers, to conduct classes with a reduced number of adult participants, since this particular population allowed us implement strategies such as having a student's journal and individual talks that facilitated the close monitoring of the participants' progress in the acquisition of new words.

We also want to highlight the satisfaction we got from using a strategy of our particular interest as videogames. Having spent a great deal of time using video games for entertainment purposes, we always had the wish to integrate them into our professional endeavours since it was our understanding that they could bring in many possibilities and opportunities for education.

On the other hand, this experience made us realize the difficulty of finding a video game that fulfills the necessary characteristics and requirements to apply this strategy effectively since it is necessary to use a game that provides enough language content and audio visual material to be explored, so it affords students the opportunity to engage with characters, stories and language outside the classroom, increasing their exposure to the language and their practice of the new vocabulary and structures encountered.

It must also be mentioned the difficulties associated with the particular characteristics of our students: not all of them had high tech computers and they could not afford to pay for commercial video games. Thus, the selection of a video game with low technological requirements and that was free to play was a challenge we had to overcome.

Finally, these classroom project allowed us to notice the positive impact of Digital Game Based Learning on adult students' motivation for learning English and on their acquisition of new vocabulary, which gives evidence of the usefulness of the integration of video games and their audio visual content with this particular population.

Also, this experience gave us the opportunity to recognize the low level of English proficiency achieved by Colombian students after finishing high school. We expect that strategies such as the one implemented in this classroom project may be used for improving this situation.

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## **Appendixes**

### **Appendix 1**

## **Lesson plan**

Name of the implementers: Diana Vanessa Grisales Valenzuela and Jorge Andres Velandia Valderrama

**Grade:**

**Date:** -----

**Lesson number:** 2

**Aim for this session:** At the end of the lesson, students will get familiar with some words related to the videogame

**Students previous knowledge in vocabulary:**

Activity	Time	Material	Reflection
<p>Warming up:</p> <p>To present short video about the video game where there is an invitation and explanation about the game</p> <p><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=brNGDA5R048">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=brNGDA5R048</a></p>	5 minutes	<p>Speaker</p> <p>video</p> <p>beam</p> <p>Computer</p>	
<p>Introduction of essential vocabulary:</p> <p>Teacher will introduce some vocabulary by using images or videos extracted from the game. Students will need those words for playing the tutorial of the video game</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enemy</li> </ul>	10 minutes	<p>Computers</p> <p>Ethernet</p> <p>connection</p> <p>Video</p> <p>beam</p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nexus</li> <li>• Champion</li> <li>• Ward</li> <li>• Ability</li> <li>• level</li> <li>• Turret</li> <li>• Middle</li> <li>• attack</li> <li>• Slain</li> </ul>			
<p>Students will make the tutorial of the video game that consist in three phases:</p> <p>1th phases: Players start in one line of the map and the video game itself explains some basic mechanics like how to move, how to use abilities, and what you have to do to win. Also, they can change the character for the one that they like the most.</p> <p>2th phase: Students will enter to the normal map with three lines and there are only one rival and they will have to get to the nexus and destroy it.</p> <p>3th phase: Students will play against bots in a normal 5vs5 match and they will be able to see the necessity of buying items in order to make their character stronger.</p>	25	<p>Computers</p> <p>Ethernet connection</p> <p>Video beam</p>	

Students will complete a match making activity to know students understanding of the presented vocabulary	10 minutes	Nothing	
Teachers will ask students for their first impression about the video game and then use it into the classroom.	10 minutes	Eduplay	

## Appendix2

## Journal format

**Name:**  
**Date:**  
**Session number:**

1. What was well in this session?

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2. What was not so well in this session?

3. What would I do different for improving the session?

4. What was my role during the lesson?

5. What were the students' roles during the session?

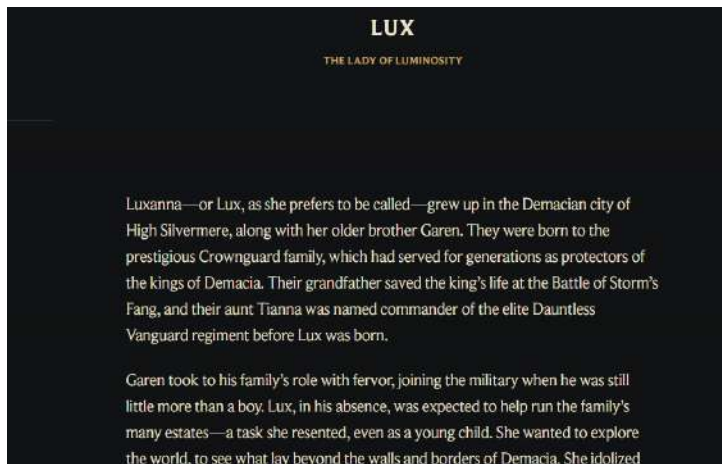
6. How assessment was carried out during this session?

7. Describe the level of engagement of students?

## Resources:

## Appendix 1





Taken from: [https://universe.leagueoflegends.com/en\\_PL/story/champion/lux](https://universe.leagueoflegends.com/en_PL/story/champion/lux)

## Appendix :True damage- Giants



Taken from:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sVZpHFXcFJw>

We selected this song since it has many words related to the gameplay (Slow motion, underground, royalty, stunting, shattering damage, rewind, blade, punishment.) Also, the animation is very similar to the animated movie Spider into the spider-verse that was very popular during the last year. In addition, the musical genres (hip hop, trap, EDM) it handles make it very attractive for young audiences

## Appendix 2: The curse of the sad mummy (character song)

Taken from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0AvWV6Mk374>

## Appendix 3: Legends never die



We selected this song since it has many words related with the gameplay and the lore of league of legends (Screaming, bleed, greatness, fight, scars, avenge, suffer). In terms of the animation, it shows a different and more human version of the heroes that are part of the game. In addition, the musical genres (Pop, EDM) it handles make it very attractive for young audiences

taken from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r6zIGXun57U>

## Appendix 4: Lux comic



## Appendix 5 Inside the game

